

16TH CLIMB: JAPAN'S NUMBER ONE MOUNTAIN?



FUJISAN'S
STRING OF LIGHTS

THE HEADLAMPS OF CLIMBERS
SHINE ON FUJISAN AT NIGHT,
EVERYONE HEADED FOR THE
SUMMIT. THIS STRAND OF
LIGHT CAN BE SEEN FROM THE
NEARBY FUJI FIVE LAKES AREA,
AS WELL AS FROM FAR
AWAY FISHING BOATS IN
SURUGA BAY.



WAAA...

YES,
BUT...

SO,
YOU DON'T
REMEMBER
THAT FAR
BACK,

HUH?

WHY DON'T
YOU GO
CLIMB IT?

WHAT
ON EARTH
ARE YOU
TELLING OUR
DAUGHTER!?

I WASN'T
EVEN INTO
CLIMBING
AS A HOBBY
WHEN I
DID IT-

YOU
CAN GO
CONFIRM
YOURSELF
WHETHER
YOU CAN
SEE THE
MILKY WAY

BECAUSE YOU CAN
GO BY BUS TO
2300 METERS, A
FUJISAN CLIMB HAS
A SURPRISINGLY
LOW ELEVATION
GAIN.

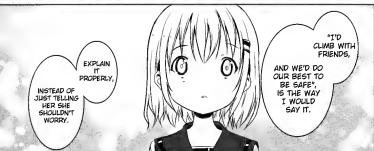


THE
NEXT
DAY



YOU WANT TO CLIMB FUJISAN, BUT YOU CAN'T?









SURE-
I'M JUST
TAKING A
BREAK,
COME IN

AH, SO-

I WAS
WONDERING
IF YOU HAD
A SPARE
MOMENT?

EXCUSE
ME-



HMM,
I WONDER
IF I
COULD...

ON FUJISAN,
CAN YOU
SEE THE
MILKY WAY?

I DON'T
KNOW IF I
WAS REALLY
AWARE OF IT
AT THE TIME



BUT,

THERE'S SO
MUCH LIGHT
COMING
FROM TOKYO
THAT IT'S
POSSIBLE
YOU CAN'T
SEE IT.



I
DEFINITELY
WANT YOU
TO SEE IT

THE FACE OF
THE CLOUDS
BELOW, THE
VAST STARRY
SKY ABOVE, THE
WHOLE WORLD
WAS REALLY
BEAUTIFUL.



I'D SAY
THAT'S OK,
THOUGH

MY
MEMORIES
ARE MOSTLY
OF MY HEART
POUNDING
AS I
CLIMBED-

I REALLY
DIDN'T KNOW
ANYTHING
BACK THEN

MY
FRIENDS
INVITED ME-
IT WAS
MY FIRST
CLIMB, TOO

I WENT
WHEN I
WAS IN
HIGH
SCHOOL,



IT FELT
SO FRESH

LIKE I WAS
IN ANOTHER
WORLD-

IT WAS
COMPLETELY
DIFFERENT
FROM THE
SITUATIONS
AND PLACES
I'D ALWAYS
LIVED IN.







ISN'T IT
OK TO TRY
LETTING
HER DO WHAT
SHE WANTS
ONCE IN
A WHILE?

OUR QUIET
DAUGHTER,
THAT NEEDED
SO MUCH
LOOKING
AFTER, IS
NOW GOING
OUT AND
HAVING FUN.

AOI IS
ALREADY
IN HIGH
SCHOOL



BUT NOW,
SO MANY
OF THOSE
MEMORIES
STAY WITH
ME!

RIGHT? BACK
WHEN I CLIMBED IT,
IT WAS SUCH
AN EXCITING TIME
FOR ME, ALTHOUGH
I DID WANT TO TURN
BACK SEVERAL TIMES
ON THE WAY UP...

YES,

IT'S NOT
THAT I
DON'T KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE
SAYING-



**IF THAT'S ALL
YOU HAVE TO
SAY TO ME,
MAYBE YOU
SHOULDN'T
COME HOME
AS OFTEN!**

S-
SORRY...



WOULDN'T
IT BE NICE
FOR HER TO
HAVE ONE
SUMMER'S
MEMOR-

BUT,



BUT,
I NEVER
CARED
THAT
MUCH

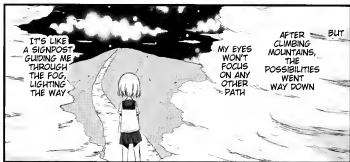
I HAD
SO MANY
DIFFERENT
THINGS I
WANTED
TO TRY

A LONG
TIME AGO

I'M HOME!

ALL OF
THEM FUN

I WAS
ALWAYS
JUST
DRIFTING
ALONG



IT'S LIKE
A SIGNPOST
GUIDING ME
THROUGH
THE FOG,
LIGHTING
THE WAY

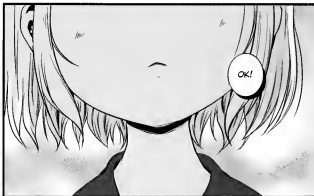
MY EYES
WON'T
FOCUS
ON ANY
OTHER
PATH

AFTER
CLIMBING
MOUNTAINS,
THE
POSSIBILITIES
WENT
WAY DOWN

BUT

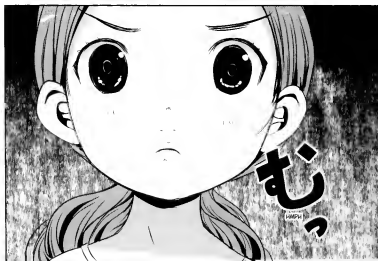


HEY, MOM?



OK!







SHE'S REALLY NOT GOING TO BEND ON THIS, IS SHE...





1 SUNRISE CLIMBING

EVERY JAPANESE PERSON KNOWS ABOUT FUJISAN, AND IT'S LIKELY THE FIRST MOUNTAIN THEY VISUALIZE WHEN THINKING ABOUT MOUNTAINS. IN FACT, IT CAN BE SAID THAT EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO DO NOT CLIMB MOUNTAINS AS A HOBBY, MANY PEOPLE HAVE CLIMBED FUJISAN.

EVEN AMONGST THE OTHER MOUNTAINS OF JAPAN, THE PEAK OF FUJISAN IS OUTSTANDINGLY HIGH (383 METERS HIGHER THAN THE SECOND HIGHEST, KITADAKE, AT 3193 METERS). YOU CAN START AT A FAIRLY HIGH ELEVATION TRAILHEAD, THOUGH, AS HIGH UP AS 2400 METERS. IN ADDITION, FUJISAN HAS FACILITIES ALL THE WAY UP THE NOT TOO DIFFICULT, NOT TOO DANGEROUS CLIMB.

OVERALL THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL IS INTERMEDIATE, AND YOU CAN FIND THE CLIMB IN GUIDEBOOKS LISTED UNDER ELEMENTARY LEVEL CLIMBS. THE TRAILS THEMSELVES ARE FOR THE MOST PART NOT DANGEROUS, BUT CAN BE QUITE STRENUOUS.

BECAUSE OF THIS, SINCE LONG AGO THE CUSTOM HAS BEEN FOR FUJISAN TO BE CLIMBED AT NIGHT. TO SEE THE SUNRISE FROM THE TOP OF JAPAN'S HIGHEST MOUNTAIN BRINGS CLIMBERS FROM NOT JUST JAPAN, BUT ALL OVER THE WORLD. IT'S SURPRISING TO SEE HOW MANY PEOPLE'S FEET CARRY THEM OVER THE SEAS TO CLIMB IT. THE SUNRISE FROM THE PEAK IS SAID TO BE BEAUTIFUL BEYOND DESCRIPTION, AND IF THERE'S ANY WAY YOU CAN SEE IT, IT'S A SPECTACLE YOU CAN'T MISS.

NOW, A LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CLIMB TO SEE THE SUNRISE (GORAIKOU). FUJISAN IS QUITE POPULAR FOR THIS, BUT THERE ARE OTHER MOUNTAINS THAT YOU CAN SEE THE SUNRISE FROM, THAT HAVE HUTS NEAR THE PEAK WHERE YOU CAN STAY THE NIGHT, AND DON'T HAVE THE CROWDS. WHEREVER YOU FIND A HUT NEAR THE TRAIL WHERE YOU CAN SEE THE SUNRISE, THOUGH, YOU'RE BOUND TO FIND SOME PEOPLE WATCHING IN AWE OF ITS MAJESTY. EVEN WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF AN OVERNIGHT STAY ON THE MOUNTAIN AND THE BLESSING OF GOOD WEATHER, I BELIEVE IT'S WORTH THE CHALLENGE. FROM THE MOUNTAIN, WHEN THE MORNING SUN EMERGES FROM THE ALTITUDE OF THE CLOUDS, PEOPLE HAVE VARIOUS REACTIONS, BUT NEVER SAY THAT ONCE WAS ENOUGH.

STILL, BEFORE YOU SEE THE SUNRISE, THE SETTING SUN IN THE EVENING IS A SIGHT THAT'S NO LESS BEAUTIFUL, AND SEEING THEM BOTH IS WONDERFUL. AND WHEN YOU CAN'T MAKE IT TO YOUR DESTINATION IN TIME, YOUR MENTAL STATE IS STAINED A DEEP SHADE OF BLUE (BITTER SMILE).

FROM THE TOP OF A MOUNTAIN FLAT, THE RED DYED SKY IS INCOMPARABLE, AND IT MAKES FOR QUITE AN EMOTIONAL SCENE. THE CLIMBING SEASON FOR FUJISAN IS SHORT, ONLY FROM THE BEGINNING OF JULY TO THE END OF AUGUST, SO HOW ABOUT YOU GO AND MAKE SOME MEMORIES ONE SUMMER?

NOW, THERE IS A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN THE FUJISAN OF SUMMER AND WINTER—MINUS FORTY DEGREE TEMPERATURES, EIGHTY KILOMETER PER HOUR WINDS, AND IF THINGS GO POORLY, IT CAN BE AS EXTREME AN ENVIRONMENT AND AS DANGEROUS AS THE HIMALAYAS. SNOW COMPACTED BY THE WIND GIVES LITTLE BITE TO THE TEETH OF CRAMPONS (SHOES WITH CLAWS THAT DIG INTO SNOW TO MAKE IT EASIER TO WALK), AND YOUR SPEED SLOWS TO A CRAWL IN THOSE CONDITIONS. UNTIL AROUND JUNE, FUJISAN IS STILL COVERED IN SNOW. WITHOUT A DOUBT, YOU SHOULD NOT CLIMB DURING THIS SEASON.



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Encouragement of Climb